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The Evangelist Talks

The Editor is kind enough to tender me the use of my own columns this week, and I gladly avail myself of the opportunity to talk to the Brethren of the Conference. Very delightful have been our fellowship and our mutual labors for the Master during the last twelve months. Each week of this year, now vanished with its record into the eternities, I have journeyed to your homes, joyfully anticipating the sincere welcome, the hearty smile, the warm hand clasp, the pleasant and profitable fireside conversations, the earnest consultations, the fervent prayers, the heart to heart talks, and all the sweet fellowship which I have always found everywhere among the Brethren. I have gone to the office of the business man, not to be thrown carelessly aside, but to be carefully preserved for his earliest leisure. I have entered the homes of the busy housekeepers, the blessed Marys and Marthas of our fraternity, where Christ is a guest, and tho I sometimes find them "troubled and careful about many things," yet they have not forgotten "the one thing needful," and they never forget to give me welcome. I have entered the chambers of affliction with such messages of patience and consolation as you have given me to bear to them, and I am sure that if you could have seen how much these loving messages have lightened many a weary burden of sorrow and suffering, you would be much more "instant in season" to "comfort them which are in any trouble by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."

I have sat by the aged, looking thru the windows of the long twilight and the evening, beyond the shadows which are but for a little space, and bounded by the glory beyond, where there is no setting sun. I have regularly visited the pastors' studies where I feel so much at home, and where I have many a long chat with the talking brethren. There is the Christian fellowship between us, and the pastoral fellowship, and the ministerial fellowship, until it is fellowship upon fellowship, and we are brothers most truly. Now it isn't very often that I can get you all together as I have you here, and talk to you where you cannot talk back. It isn't always that the preachers like everything I say, and so they will sometimes "use their liberty" and "get after me" with a good deal of candor, which is often very profitable. I have my faults as well as the brethren, and it would be presumption in me to take the ground that no one should dare tell me of my faults. I think it is well to be lovingly frank with one another in the Lord, and thus by considerate correction to help one another in earnest striving after better things, a better understanding of the truth, and particularly a better exemplifica-

tion of that truth in our lives, that we may all be living epistles of Christ, showing forth his marvelous grace and his wonderful power to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him. Brethren, perhaps there are none of us as thoroughly saved as we desire to be. Doubtless there are none of us as thoroughly saved as we ought to be. We may go still further and say that none of us are as thoroughly saved as we might be. If there is any class in the church which more than all others should be saved to the uttermost,—uttermost of grace; uttermost of God's power; uttermost of holiness; uttermost of consecration,—it is ourselves, we to whom is committed the preaching of the Word, and who are to be "ensamples of the flock," walking, breathing, living, longing, self-sacrificing pictures of Christ, setting him forth to the church, and setting him forth to the world. God help us that we may cast this our burden on the Lord, so that we may find him working with us, and ourselves humble but delighted and enthusiastic co-workers with him.

From your work in the four quarters ye have come up into the joy and fellowship of this great reunion, blessed for this as also for the setting forward of the Lord's work, and like my work also from week to week in bringing you to think of the same things pertaining to the kingdom, and to know each other as co-workers in Christ, and to "speak often one to another as they that fear the Lord. And the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him. And they shall be mine saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels."

"Nevertheless I have somewhat against thee," in that there is much talent among you that is hid in a napkin, and not used for our Lord's profit as it might be used. Behold, in your churches you preach perhaps to hundreds, but thru me ye may preach to thousands. But ye have not used the opportunity of my widespread ministry. It is well to set thy light upon that little candlestick of your own pastorate and cause it to shine there beautifully, but it is not well to withhold it from this higher candlestick from whence it may enlighten so many thousands far and wide. The press has made the world your parish, and weightier responsibility is the logic of wider opportunity. And that responsibility the Lord has laid at the door of the ready writer. Arise up; the Lord hath need of thee.

Peace be with you all. No word or act of this conference, I am sure, will cause me to blush when I publish it to the world. "The Lord is in his holy temple." "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God?" Truth, harmony, wisdom, peace, gentleness, courtesy, kindness, becometh it. God be with you 'till we meet again.